

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are all the claims pending in the application. Applicants thank the Examiner for accepting the drawings. Applicants also thank the Examiner for acknowledging Applicants claim for foreign priority and receipt of the certified priority document.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-4 and 9-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kimura (JP 9-71348). Claims 1, 4, and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Odaka et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,560,596).

The Examiner cites Figures 1-6 and 8-9, as described in a partial translation of Kimura as disclosing the features of these claims. In particular, the Examiner cites item 7 of these drawings as corresponding to the recited moving member, item 6 as corresponding to the rotating member of the present invention, and item 15 as corresponding to the holding member recited in the claims.

For the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection using Odaka et al., the Examiner cites item 108 as the moving member, item 110 as the rotating member, and items 112, 113 the holding member recited in the claims.

Solely to advance prosecution, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to more clearly define that the moving member of the present invention is movable in at least a horizontal direction. Applicants have also defined the horizontal direction. Applicants reserve the right to prosecute the broader embodiment in a continuing application.

The Examiner has acknowledged explicitly (by underline) on page 6 of the Office Action that the horizontal feature is not disclosed or suggested by any of the cited references. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, and dependent claims 2-5 are allowable for this same reason. Applicants note that in the present invention, when the stacked sheet members are parallel to the horizontal direction, conveyance of a sheet member is conducted smoothly and thus avoids scratching of the sheet member surface due to sheet members being rubbed against each other.

With respect to the rejections against claim 1, 4, and 5 based on the Okoda reference, Applicants note that the moving member (the arm 108) rotates and does not move in the horizontal direction. Thus, Odaka neither teaches nor suggests this feature.

Applicants have similarly amended claim 9 in the manner of claim 1. Claims 10 and 11 have been canceled. Therefore, claims 9, 12, and 13 are allowable for similar reasons as above.

Claims 6-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Müller (U.S. Patent No. 4,759,670). Claim 6 has been amended to depend from claim 1, and is allowable at least for this reason.

Claim Objections

Claims 14-18 have been objected to. Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that these claims include patentable subject matter. Applicants also thank the Examiner for the suggestion of amending claim 14 to recite --the printing plate--, rather than “the sheet” to place the claim in condition for allowance. Applicants have accordingly done so.

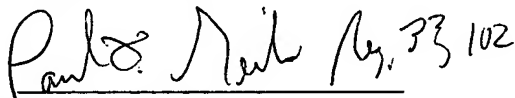
AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No. 10/697,652

Attorney Docket: Q78263

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: November 16, 2004